U. S. Aides Won't Testify on Chile

By Laurence Stern 11-14-75
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The Ford administration has refused to permit government officials to testify in public hearing of the Senate intelligence committee on covert U.S. political operations in Chile.

Committee sources attribute this refusal to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who was serving as President Nixon's special assistant for national security affairs during the covert program to block the election of socialist candidate Salvador Allende and, afterwards, to topple his government.

"Kissinger's footprints are all over this case," said a senior member of the Senate committee.

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), who heads the panel, regards the American intervention in Chile as a "perfect case study of covert action.'—one which he feels "would give the public a clear idea of the hazards and pitfalls of clandestine political operations."

The committee has pieced together a detailed scenario of U.S. implication in the events that led to the overthrow and death of Allende by a right-wing military coup.

Most of that testimony is classified, and was delivered in executive session. It is now a subject of negotiation between the committee and the State Department.

Church is unwilling to pursue the course adopted by his House counterpart, Rep. Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.), and declassify material on his committee's own initiative or publically confront the executive department on classification questions.

Kissinger presided over the Forty Committee, the national security bureaucracy's top-level forum for covert operations, which approved some $8 million in funding for anti-Allende action. This was used, in part, to support newspapers, radio stations and public action groups seeking to overthrow the former president of Chile.

It was learned this week that David Phillips, the CIA official who retired from the agency to lead a public defense of CIA actions, was prohibited by the agency from appearing as a witness on Chile before the intelligence committee. The CIA invoked the secrecy oath sworn by Phillips and all agency officials upon entering and leaving the service.

Kissinger appeared in executive session on Aug. 14 to answer questions on Chile but subsequently has declined to give his answers in public. Church and other committee members regard Kissinger as the chief administration bar to disclosure both of the Chile story and the assassination report by the committee.

Notes taken from a special meeting of the Forty Committee in June, 1970, recorded Kissinger as saying of the impending election in Chile: "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people."